

CD 2010--60/61



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF MUSIC

Chamber Music Series

Miriam Fried, violin

Lorand Fenyves Resident Artist

Monday, October 18, 2010

7:30 p.m. Walter Hall

Edward Johnson Building

2010-11

A joyous music season

Miriam Fried, violin
Lorand Fenyves Resident Artist
Dina Vainshtein, piano

PROGRAM

Violin Sonata No. 1, in D, Op. 12 No. 1

Allegro con brio
Tema con variazioni. Andante con moto
Rondo: Allegro

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

Violin Sonata No. 1, BB84

Allegro appassionato
Adagio
Allegro

Béla Bartók
(1881-1945)

INTERMISSION

Violin Sonata in A, Op. 47 (Kreutzer)

Adagio sostenuto - Presto
Andante con variazioni
Finale (Presto)

Ludwig van Beethoven

The Chamber Music Series is generously supported by
Peter A. Allen, Roger D. Moore and an anonymous donor.

This concert is performed on the Edith McConica Steinway piano.

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Program Notes

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

Violin Sonata No. 1 in D, Op. 12 No. 1 (1797-8)

Of the three best-known classical Viennese composers, Beethoven was by far the worst violinist. Where Mozart and Haydn excelled, Beethoven sent a shudder down the spine of his listeners when he took up the fiddle. "Have mercy – quit!" one of his friends once exclaimed. His pupil Ferdinand Ries wrote of the painful experience of playing violin sonatas with the composer. Beethoven would become wrapped up in the music, he said, not caring about fingering mistakes and intonation. Early in his career, as a young man in Bonn, Beethoven was required to earn part of his living as an orchestral viola player. Later, when he first arrived in Vienna, Beethoven still continued to take violin lessons from his friend Wenzel Krumpholz and from Ignaz Schuppanzigh, the leading Viennese violinist of the day. Later still, he continued to keep abreast of new developments in violin technique established in France by Viotti and his followers.

Why Beethoven turned so enthusiastically to the violin sonata – he wrote eight of his ten violin sonatas in the four years after 1798 – reflects the ready market he found for his chamber music among a growing middle-class, increasingly interested in music. No one commissioned the sonatas. Beethoven dedicated the three Op. 12 sonatas to his most recent teacher, Antonio Salieri, with whom he was studying vocal composition, and composed them quickly. He is known to have

performed one of them as pianist, with Schuppanzigh. He followed the convention of the time by issuing them "for pianoforte with violin," doing this to help sales of his music. But the truth was that in all ten, and, as we'll hear in today's program, in the *Kreutzer* in particular, he created real duo sonatas that called for considerable technical and musical expertise from both instruments.

This didn't prevent a reviewer in the *Leipzig Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* from complaining in 1799 that the Op. 12 sonatas were "heavily laden with unusual difficulties" and "made him feel like a man who had wandered through an alluring forest and at last emerged tired and worn out."

When the music was first published, Beethoven was criticized for his abundance of ideas and the prominence of the violin. After a brief opening flourish for both instruments, the lyrical opening melody of the D major sonata is given first to the violin and then echoed on piano. This goes beyond the convention of the accompanied sonata and Beethoven's assertive writing for the violin clearly brings home his concept of the duo sonata. Neither instrument predominates to the exclusion of the other.

The most striking moments come in the slow movement. After shining the spotlight on first the piano then the violin, Beethoven's minor key variation, with its rapid alternation of loud and soft and bold key changes produces (in the words of the early reviewer of the music) "obstinacy which fails to interest us, a striving for strange modulations, an objection to customary harmonic progressions, a heaping up of difficulties

on difficulties.” Exactly! The conclusion of the movement takes us even further into the young Beethoven’s imagination. The sonata ends with a galloping, good natured rondo finale.

BÉLA BARTÓK (1881-1945)

Violin Sonata No. 1, BB84 (1921)

The violin figures prominently in Bartók’s creative work. His two numbered violin sonatas were written for the Hungarian Jelly d’Arányi, whom Bartók knew from their shared student days. They gave early performances of both works in London in the 1920s. The influences on the First Sonata of 1921 include much that was new and progressive at the time. Bartók admired Stravinsky’s early ballets and had recently worked through their influence in the driving rhythms of his own one-act pantomime *The Miraculous Mandarin*. The tightly-written late sonatas of Debussy opened up more possibilities for him, together with the intense and perfumed *Myths* of the Polish composer Karol Szymanowski. The atonal music of Arnold Schoenberg intrigued Bartók at this somewhat radical stage of his career. His conscious avoidance of a key centre in the First Sonata and its frequent dissonances give its sound world a distinctively Viennese expressionist feel. Bartók considered the sonata to lie in the key of C sharp minor – but keep an open mind about this. For example, the rippling cascade of notes on the piano at the opening of the piece is clearly in the key of C sharp minor. Yet, when the violin first appears, with the piano still in

full flight, it is squarely in the key of C major.

In the first two movements, violin and piano seldom share thematic material. One commentator (Bartók’s biographer Halsey Stevens) says: “It is as though the players are involved in different works simultaneously – works which correspond in length and structure and complement each other at every point, but share no themes or motives.” Still, underlying the structure of Bartók’s First Sonata lies the framework of the classical three-movement sonata. The scale is large; the piece lasts more than half an hour. The mood is rhapsodic and improvisatory from the very outset. “Ideas seem to be suggested but never grasped,” the American composer John Cage writes. “Every moment passes just as one begins to realize its presence. It makes for dreams and visions.”

As in the traditional sonata structure, a long and complex opening movement is complemented by a lyrical slow movement and rapid-fire finale. The slow movement, *Adagio*, opens with an ethereal, rhapsodic solo from the violin. It is punctuated by a series of Debussy-like chords from the piano. The contemplative mood of the outer sections frames a central energetic section. The finale brings the more familiar Bartók, with its whirlwind, *moto perpetuo* rhythms, driving folk-like themes and pounding chords. For all its folk music spontaneity, the movement keeps to the structure of a rondo and the score is dense with intricate variants, inversions, augmentations of the themes. This very physical music builds to a frenzy and ends with a flourish and biting harmonies.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Violin Sonata in A, Op. 47 (Kreutzer) (1802-3)

The *Kreutzer* sonata very nearly came down to us as the *Bridgetower*. A handsome young violin virtuoso, George Augustus Polgreen Bridgetower, gave the first performance of the work – significantly, given the rising public interest in violin sonatas in Vienna, at a public concert and not in a private salon. This was in a hall in the Vienna Augarten in 1803 and Beethoven himself played piano. The two musicians had met at the house of Prince Lichnowsky and Beethoven had praised the English-born violinist as “a very skilled virtuoso, entirely the master of his instrument.” He also humorously – if not politically correctly – referred to Bridgetower’s ethnically mixed heritage in the heading he wrote on the original autograph manuscript: “Sonata mulattica Composta per il Mulatto Brischdauer / gran pazzo e compositore mulattico.” Bridgetower and Beethoven were both known for their volatile temperaments and when they became enamoured of the same woman, they inevitably had a falling out. Bridgetower was the more successful in the love department. And the price he had to pay for his success was the withdrawal of the dedication of the sonata. Not long afterwards, Rodolphe Kreutzer, Napoleon’s chief violinist, accepted the dedication of the sonata, but never played it. Berlioz (who thought the work “one of the most sublime of all violin sonatas”) reported that Kreutzer viewed the music as “monstrously

unintelligible.” Beethoven’s most brilliant violin sonata managed well without its dedicatee’s advocacy, however. Many reprints followed throughout Europe and arrangements for piano, four-hands (by Czerny), for string quintet and piano quartet were soon in the works.

It has been said that the *Kreutzer*, Beethoven’s most brilliant sonata, did for the violin sonata what his *Rasumovsky* quartets did for the string quartet and the *Waldstein* and *Appassionata* sonatas did for the piano sonata. He wrote the *Kreutzer* in 1803, at a time that the piano was getting more brilliant and its hammers and strings more powerful. At the same time, virtuoso violinists were strengthening their fiddles, restringing them and playing with stronger bows. Performers were beginning to play in larger halls and a more robust sound was needed. Beethoven alerted his violinists to these changes by describing the *Kreutzer* as a “Sonata for piano and violin obbligato, written in a decidedly concertante style, as though a concerto”. As an indication of their brilliance, both outer movements are marked Presto. The opening movement is drawn on a grand scale and includes much virtuosity. The central slow movement is a set of four elaborate variations on a richly resonant melody. And the finale is a whirling *tarantella*. The sonata was written quickly in late April 1803 and the improvisatory spirit is strong. The finale came ready-made, as the rejected movement from an earlier Sonata, Op. 30 No. 1.

Notes © 2010 Keith Horner. Comments welcomed: khnnotes@sympatico.ca

Biographies

MIRIAM FRIED has been recognized for many years as one of the world's preeminent violinists. A consummate musician – equally accomplished as recitalist, concerto soloist or chamber musician – she has been heralded for her “fiery intensity and emotional depth” (*Musical America*) as well as for her technical mastery. Her supreme blend of artistry and musicianship continues to inspire audiences worldwide.

Miriam Fried has played with virtually every major orchestra in the United States and Europe and has been a frequent guest with the principal orchestras of Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, New York, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, as well as with the Israel Philharmonic, the London Symphony, the Royal Philharmonic and the Vienna Symphony. Recital tours have taken her to all of the major music centers in North America and to Brussels, London, Milan, Munich, Rome, Paris, Salzburg, Stockholm and Zurich.

In recent seasons, Ms. Fried's schedule has included orchestral engagements with such prestigious ensembles as the Boston Symphony, the Chicago Symphony, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Milwaukee Symphony, Chautauqua Institution, the Louisville Orchestra, the Berlin Philharmonic, the Orchestre de Paris, the BBC Philharmonic, the Montreal Symphony, the Czech Philharmonic, the Jerusalem Symphony, the Orquesta Filarmonica de Mexico, the Japan Philharmonic and the St. Petersburg Philharmonic. She recently

premiered a violin concerto written for her by Donald Erb with the Grand Rapids Symphony and recorded the work for Koss. Since 1993 she has been Artistic Director of the Ravinia Institute, one of the country's leading summer programs for young musicians. Her involvement there has included regular performances at the Ravinia Festival, including recitals and concerts with the Chicago Symphony.

Ms. Fried's highly praised New York recitals of the complete Bach Sonatas and Partitas for solo violin were the culmination of three years of international performances. She recently returned to this music, recording the complete Sonatas and Partitas in France, which were released in the spring of 1999 on the Lyrinx label. She has also made a prize-winning recording of the Sibelius Concerto with the Helsinki Philharmonic under the direction of Okko Kamu, available on the Finlandia label, which has become a best-seller.

Chamber music plays an important role in Ms. Fried's musical life. She was recently the first violinist of the Mendelssohn String Quartet and collaborates regularly with her son, pianist Jonathan Biss. Miriam Fried continues her impressive tenure as Artistic Director of the Steans Institute at Ravinia.

Miriam Fried plays a particularly noteworthy violin, a 1718 Stradivarius that is said to have been the favorite of its 18th-century owner, the composer-conductor Louis Spohr. It was also owned

by Regina Strinasacchi who, it is thought, used the instrument to play with Mozart the Sonata in B-flat, K. 454, which had been written for her. A noted pedagogue, Miriam Fried is on the faculty of New England Conservatory and is invited to give master classes throughout the world. Ms. Fried studied with Lorand Fenyves in Geneva, Switzerland during 1964-65, and maintained a close relationship with him until his death in 2004.

Russian-born pianist **DINA VAINSHTEIN** has degrees from the Gnesins' Institute of Music in Moscow, the Cleveland Institute of Music and the New England Conservatory of Music. Ms. Vainshtein received a Special Prize for Best Collaboration at the International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow.

Ms. Vainshtein has performed at Alice Tully Hall and Weill Recital Hall in New York City, Jordan Hall in Boston and the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory. Other performances include the Ravinia Festival, Caramoor Festival, Music Academy of the West, Meadowmount and Heifetz International Music Institute.

She has given live performances on WGBH (Boston) and for NPR's *Performance Today* series. Her recording for the Naxos label with violinist Frank Huang received critical acclaim. At present, Ms. Vainshtein is a collaborative pianist for the Walnut Hill School and the New England Conservatory.

LORAND FENYVES RESIDENCY EVENTS

MONDAY, OCTOBER 18

■ VIOLIN RECITAL

Miriam Fried, violin
Dina Vainshtein, piano

Beethoven Violin Sonata Op. 12, No. 1
Bartók Violin Sonata No. 1
Beethoven Kreutzer Sonata
7:30 pm. Walter Hall

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 19

■ MASTER CLASS WITH MIRIAM FRIED

1:00 - 3:00 pm. Walter Hall
Free admission.

■ REMINISCING FENYVES

Ms. Fried shares her memories of Lorand Fenyves, followed by a Q&A session.
3:00 - 4:00 pm. Walter Hall
Free admission.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20

■ MASTER CLASS WITH MIRIAM FRIED

10:00 am - 12:30 pm. Walter Hall
Free admission.



LORAND FENYVES RESIDENCY PROGRAM

The Lorand Fenyves Residency Program was established in 2006 to honour Mr. Fenyves' incomparable vocation. The Residency is the only program of its kind at the University of Toronto to provide undergraduate and graduate string students direct access to world renowned master teachers and artists. Visiting Artists' residencies include intensive individual coaching and master classes, and public recitals and lectures.

Past visitors have included Peter Frankl and Steven Isserlis.

Born in Budapest in 1918, Lorand Fenyves first visited Canada in 1962 as a coach for Les Jeunesses Musicales at Mount Orford. In 1965 he joined the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music as a visiting lecturer and subsequently became professor of violin. He retired in 1983 but remained active and maintained a full teaching schedule up until his death in March 2004. In 1988 he established a scholarship to provide financial assistance to a gifted string student in the faculty's performance program.

Professor Fenyves received his early musical education in Budapest where he graduated with honours from the Franz Liszt Academy of Music. Well before his graduation he had already embarked on a concert career that included, at the age of 13, an appearance as soloist under conductor Felix von Weingartner. On the eve of the Second World War he left behind an established reputation in Europe to become concertmaster of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra at the invitation of its founder, Bronislaw Huberman, the great Polish violinist and humanist. In 1957 he returned to Europe to take over the same position with the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande in Geneva. During this period he also performed extensively with orchestras and in recitals throughout Europe.

From early in his career Prof. Fenyves took a keen interest in the training of young musicians. He was co-founder of the Israel Academy of Music in Tel Aviv and in Geneva his direction of the "classe de virtuosité" at the Conservatoire de Genève drew students from around the world. Frequently invited to give master classes in Europe, he was also invited to Japan in 1980 and visited every year thereafter as guest teacher at Japan's celebrated Toho Gakuen School of Music in Tokyo. But in Canada his influence was enormous — in addition to his teaching at U of T and the Royal Conservatory of Music he was associated with the Jeunesses Musicales and the National Youth Orchestra of Canada for many years. He has given master classes from coast to coast and was director of the Academy of String Quartets at the Banff School of Fine Arts. Among his many students who occupy important positions throughout the musical world are members of the distinguished St. Lawrence String Quartet, one of Canada's world-class quartets.

During his concert career Prof. Fenyves played not only the standard repertoire but also introduced his audiences to a wide variety of contemporary works and has appeared with many great conductors. He recorded for Decca, Du Disque, Sayo, Musical Heritage, RCS and CBC.

The Faculty of Music gratefully acknowledges the generosity of the individuals, foundations and organizations that have contributed to the Lorand Fenyves Residency Program since its inception.

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